



Kentucky Department of Education

Bylaws and Policies

Three-hour training for experienced school-based decision making membership

Facilitator's Guide

Welcome and Introductions	15 minutes
Understanding the Difference Between Bylaw and Policy	15 minutes
Bylaws	45 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Policies	80 minutes
Closing	10 minutes

***Remind participants prior to the training session to bring a copy of their school council bylaws and policies**

Materials Needed

- Bylaws and Policies Booklet – one for each participant
- Resource Guide – one for each participant
- chart paper
- markers
- easel (optional)
- highlighters (optional)
- Post-It notes (optional)
- name tags
- computer for PowerPoint presentation
- Internet connectivity, if available
- Sample booklets of KDE's Training Session Bylaws and Policies, if needed

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome each participant. If working with school council members from multiple school councils, ensure that schools are sitting together. Review the materials that are provided as well as highlighters and Post-It notes (if providing). Have each participant introduce themselves and the role that they have on the school council (i.e., administrator, teacher or parent). Thank each participant for their service, especially parents. Encourage each to participate fully and to ask questions. Create a “parking lot” for questions. Review the training booklets provided to each participant: the Bylaws and Policy and the SBDM Resource Booklet. If participants did not bring their bylaws and policy manuals, have them refer to the sample provided. Remind the participants that these are for training purposes only and not to be considered exemplars. ~~For~~ in some cases, not even compliant.

Review to the session objectives.

Session Overview and Student Achievement

Ask participants to describe the main purpose of any school council. Read the student achievement paragraph, emphasizing the main focus of the school council being student achievement.

What is the difference between a bylaw and a policy?

What is the difference? Have participants discuss at their table for a minute or so. Chart out their thoughts. Then have participants turn to Page 2 and discuss the diagram. Have them think of the topics that are in their bylaws/policies and add to the chart.

Have the participants look through their bylaws and policy manual (if they have their own) and jot down two or three items for each of the questions in the box. If they do not have their own school’s manual, then have them think from memory. If some wish to share out, allow them time. This may be a place where they do not wish to share out.

Bylaws

Read through the introduction to this section. Rephrase as needed. Have the participants think about their school council meetings and a time when they referred to the bylaws for a procedural answer. Add an example from your experiences to get the conversation going. Discuss what the school council members did if the bylaws did not cover this topic.

Common Issues with Bylaws

Read through the common issues and elaborate as needed based on the experiences of the participants. Have the participants complete the activity beginning on Page 4. Review the directions and divide accordingly. If participants are using the sample

bylaws, note that not everything is included. Discuss implications. If they are using their own bylaws, determine what is included and discuss as appropriate. Do a brief overview at the end, referring back to what is required and what is best practice. Discuss possible consequences if the bylaws are vague or incomplete on some topics. Especially discuss elections and election procedures that may be in some versions of the bylaws.

Have the participants complete the reflection.

Putting Our Bylaws to Use

Divide the participants by tables to complete the examples. If each has their school's bylaws, have them compare them.

Example: A teacher has contacted the school council about speaking at the next meeting to support changes in the curriculum policy.

The bylaws should address the continuing contents of an agenda. Also check committees to see if this may be addressed there. If public comment is allowed, ensure that time limits are adhered to and that council members know they do not need to respond.

Situation 1: The school council has been discussing an item for an extended length of time and cannot reach consensus for a decision.

If the bylaws do not address the process for decision making, have the participants discuss options. These options can include continued discussion, voting (not recommended but allowable), tabling the item to the next meeting where more/new information can be shared or sending to a committee for review and recommendations.

Situation 2: A new parent member works in a factory until 4 p.m. each day.

Bylaws should reflect that meeting must follow the Kentucky Open Meetings statutes. This includes that meetings must be held a time convenient to the public. As long as it is not a hindrance to the process as a whole, school council meetings should be held at a convenient time for membership.

Situation 3: A new teacher representative on the school council has been assigned the responsibility of taking minutes at each school council meeting.

School council roles and responsibilities should be spelled out in the bylaws. There is nothing that states that a member cannot take minutes; however, this is not best practice. If a member is taking minutes, they are not participating in discussions or decisions. It is best practice to have a non-member record the minutes or have the minutes transcribed from a recording at a later date.

Situation 4: The new principal at a school wants to know who prepares the materials for the school council meetings.

The bylaws should note who prepares meeting notices, agendas and supplemental materials for meetings. By denoting this responsibility, it ensures that materials are ready and complete.

Situation 5: A group of teachers object to the change in the master schedule from a six-period day to a seven-period day.

The bylaws should include a school council specific appeals process. If it does not, then any appeals revert to the local board of education policy. This is not best practice as the BOE policy may be too general to address policy issues at the school.

Good place for a break

Policy

Read through the introduction elaborating as needed. If you choose, read each bullet point and provide an example and a non-example.

Review the list of required policies. They are outlined in the SBDM Resource booklet. Remind participants that most are in Kentucky state statutes; however, two of the policy areas come from federal regulations.

Have the participants flip through their policy manual noting the adoption dates. If their policies do not have adoption dates, discuss the implications. For any policy that is not applicable to a school, have the participants add *N/A* in the date-adopted box. If a policy is not included in their adopted policies, have participants add *DON'T HAVE* (or something similar) in the date-adopted box. For participants using the sample policies: These are dated and the manual is incomplete. Discussion of those implications can be added to conversations.

Have participants complete the reflection.

As participants go into the next section, keep the discussion going as to the implication of having a date and the consequences of not having a date, as this can be a pitfall.

Policy Pitfalls

Review the definition of a pitfall. Apply to the previous activity with the policy dates. Look at each bullet point. Give examples or non-examples to illustrate each.

Prepare participants for the scenarios. Divide the scenarios by table. Have the participants discuss what they think might be the answer and then find the answer in

their policies. If they are using the sample policies, they are to find the answer there. Have each group note a recorder and someone to report out. As facilitator, you can have the groups write comments on chart paper.

1. An instructional practice policy calls for all teachers to submit lesson plans for the upcoming week every Friday to the principal. The principal reviews each lesson plan and provides feedback.	<p>What are the pitfalls?</p> <p><i>Pitfalls may include information on the time frame as well as the responsibilities of the principal. This policy may have been developed to address a specific issue with a teacher (or teachers) and be reactive to a situation. This policy also sets up the principal to be in violation due to having to read and respond to lesson plans over the weekend.</i></p>
<p>Next Steps:</p> <p><i>The policy should be revised to include a lesson plan format and a way for teachers to work in groups to ensure content and strategies are included. Mentoring novice teachers may be included. A time frame for completion of lesson plans is applicable but the monitoring must be revised.</i></p>	
2. The budget policy says the school council must approve every professional learning expense.	<p>What are the pitfalls?</p> <p><i>Pitfalls may include the time that it would take to approve each and that this requirement does not add or enhance teaching and learning.</i></p>
<p>Next Steps:</p> <p><i>The policy could easily be revised to include that professional learning be included as part of the school improvement planning process. The school council should monitor the professional learning budget through a budget report without having each expense being approved.</i></p>	
3. The school council has been asked to pass a policy saying basketball players who coming in late or check out early will not be allowed to play in the next game.	<p>What are the pitfalls?</p> <p><i>Pitfalls include that the policy specifies only one group addressing one situation.</i></p>
<p>Next Steps:</p> <p><i>The policy appears reactive to a specific group (team). If the issue is systemic across all extracurricular teams, then the extracurricular policy could address attendance. If it is only the basketball team, then the issue should be dealt with the coach and the team individually.</i></p>	
4. To start the new school year, the parent-student handbook will include the policy that two late homework assignments in a nine-week period will result in after-school detention.	<p>What are the pitfalls?</p> <p><i>The policy appears to be vague on what constitutes a late assignment, and it does not allow for individual issues. It appears reactive, as it does not allow for teachers to address any root causes of why assignments are missing. It also does not address who covers detention or what the students will be doing in detention.</i></p>

<p>Next Steps:</p> <p><i>The policy should allow for individual teachers to plan and evaluate homework as part of their instructional strategies.</i></p>	
<p>5. A committee policy states: <i>Every committee shall have one parent member.</i></p>	<p>What are the pitfalls?</p> <p><i>The policy, as stated, is admirable. However, it places any committee that cannot recruit a parent in violation of the policy. The policy also allows only one parent and not for additional parents.</i></p>
<p>Next Steps:</p> <p><i>The policy should be written to include how parents are recruited, but not require committees to have a parent in order to conduct business.</i></p>	

Have participants complete the reflection.

Scavenger Hunt

Have participants, working in groups, think about the situations. Do they have a policy that might answer the question? If so, which policy? If they do not have their school policies, they may use the sample. Note that not all policies are included.

A new teacher wants to know what content areas her students are supposed to master.

Curriculum

Teachers are frustrated because of the Good News announcements made during the middle of third period.

Schedule of day/week

A team of teachers would like to move classrooms to be together for ease of regrouping students to address identified needs.

Assignment of students to classes/programs

A team of teachers has begun implementing weekly assessments and review days. They would like extra classroom help on Fridays from the school's instructional assistants.

Assignment of instructional and non-instructional staff time

The principal is going to use an interview committee composed of two teachers who will be teammates of the future hire and one parent (plus the principal).

Consultation

The chair of the parent involvement committee isn't conducting regularly scheduled meetings, and when meetings are held, they are not advertised and minutes are not taken.

Committees (and possibly bylaws may have additional information)

Teachers would like to ensure that content reading strategies are taught across the curriculum.

Instructional practices

Read through each of the questions. Use as a starting point for the participants to complete the final reflection. If some wish to comment, walk through their thoughts. However, comments or conversation are not necessary.

Closing

Thank each participant for their attendance and attention. Collect any sample policy books that were used as they are for training purposes only and contain non-examples. By collecting these, they will not be used inadvertently as examples when school councils are reviewing and revising their policies.

Have each participant complete an evaluation and give each an EILA certificate.